

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question occurs on adoption of the resolution.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 38 Leg.]

#### YEAS—96

Alexander	Flake	Murphy
Ayotte	Franken	Murray
Baldwin	Gardner	Nelson
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Paul
Bennet	Graham	Perdue
Blumenthal	Grassley	Peters
Blunt	Hatch	Portman
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Boozman	Heitkamp	Reid
Brown	Heller	Risch
Burr	Hirono	Roberts
Cantwell	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Inhofe	Rubio
Cardin	Isakson	Sasse
Carper	Johnson	Schatz
Casey	Kaine	Schumer
Cassidy	King	Scott
Coats	Kirk	Sessions
Cochran	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Collins	Lankford	Shelby
Coons	Leahy	Stabenow
Corker	Lee	Sullivan
Cornyn	Manchin	Tester
Cotton	Markey	Thune
Crapo	McCain	Tillis
Daines	McCaskill	Toomey
Donnelly	McConnell	Udall
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Enzi	Merkley	Warren
Ernst	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Murkowski	Wyden

#### NOT VOTING—4

Boxer	Sanders
Cruz	Vitter

The resolution (S. Res. 377) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the preamble is agreed to and the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 29, 2016, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from South Carolina and I be permitted to engage in a colloquy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PRESIDENT'S SYRIAN POLICY AND RUSSIA

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, briefly, the Senator from South Carolina and I discussed this announcement that Russia will begin withdrawing some military forces from Syria. It obviously signals Vladimir Putin's belief that he has bombed and killed enough of the opponents of the murderous Assad regime to assure Assad's survival.

For 4 years, this administration—this President—stood by as the Assad regime slaughtered nearly half a million people in Syria. Then, when Assad appeared weak, it watched as Putin intervened militarily and protected his brutal regime, in a move that the President described as Putin going into a "quagmire." Well, apparently now Vladimir Putin is leaving that "quagmire," and he is leaving a solid Bashar Assad in a position of strength. He is leaving thousands of dead moderate opposition that he has indiscriminately bombed, and the United States has their begging bowl out, asking and pleading that they somehow reach some agreement again in Geneva.

It is really embarrassing to watch this President and this Secretary of State as they continue to beg Vladimir Putin and his stooge Lavrov as they continue to place Russia in a position of influence they have not had since Anwar Sadat threw them out of Egypt in 1973.

They now have a major role to play in the Middle East. They have a military base. They have a naval base. They have upgraded airfields, and they have now solidified Bashar Assad's position in power.

Is there anybody who believes that Russia will agree to an arrangement that Bashar Assad or his stooge doesn't remain in power? Of course not. Aren't we tired of begging Vladimir Putin? Aren't we tired of watching the United States and the young men we trained and equipped being bombed by Vladimir Putin and killed and murdered? Don't we sometimes grow a little tired of that? It is no wonder that the United States of America has no standing and no influence in the region.

I don't often quote from the New York Times. I would ask my colleague if he has seen this:

The Russian move may . . . be a reflection that Mr. Putin is now supremely confident in Mr. Assad's renewed stability and can afford to step back a bit and play statesman. Mr. Putin has achieved many of his main goals: bringing Russia back to center stage as a global power; preventing, on principle, regime change by outside powers, particularly Western ones; gaining a stronger foothold in Syria; picking off Russian jihadists on the Syrian battlefield; and strengthening Mr. Assad.

I wish to ask my friend from South Carolina: Isn't it obvious what is going to happen next; and that is, an increase in fighting in eastern Ukraine, more Ukrainians slaughtered while we refuse to give them defensive weapons, but just sufficient amount of violence and killing to prevent the United States of America or the Europeans from taking any significant action? Indeed, won't there now be pressure on the part of the special interests and the industrialists, particularly in Germany, to lift the sanctions on Vladimir Putin?

Mr. GRAHAM. I think you are right, I say to Senator McCain.

Let's look at what our military leaders say rather than just look at what political people think. General Dunford, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in a hearing you chaired today was asked: What is Putin up to? What do you think he is trying to do here?

He said: Well, all I can tell you is the reason he came into Syria was to destroy ISIL and help fight ISIL. He has proven that he did not do that. He didn't try to do that.

So what General Dunford said was that basically Putin lied about why he came to Syria. If he is leaving Syria, the job against ISIL is far from done. But I think you nailed it, I say to Senator McCain. The job of propping up Assad has been accomplished.

So what General Dunford said is that the reason that Putin came into Syria was not to destroy ISIL but to help his stooge, his puppet Assad. He believes he achieved such military superiority on behalf of Assad by bombing the people we trained that he can now leave.

So at the end of the day, he is not leaving. A naval base and an air force base will be in Syria. He said: We are withdrawing our forces, but, of course, we will have a naval presence and an air base.

Here is what I would say. If he needs to help Assad in the future, he will. Geneva has become a joke. There is no way you are going to negotiate a successful agreement when Assad is backed by Russia and Iran. The opposition has been abandoned by the United States and the free world. The Russian President has bombed the people the American President trained to take Assad out.

Mr. MCCAIN. What does the Senator from South Carolina think that does to our reputation when we arm, train, and equip young men, send them in to fight, ostensibly against ISIS or Bashar Assad—although, in this case ISIS—and we stand by and watch the Russians slaughter them from the air?

Mr. GRAHAM. I think it sends a signal that you can't rely upon us. You have two training programs—one by the CIA and one by the Department of Defense. The people trained outside the Department of Defense have been wholesale slaughtered by the Russian air attacks, and we have done nothing about it.